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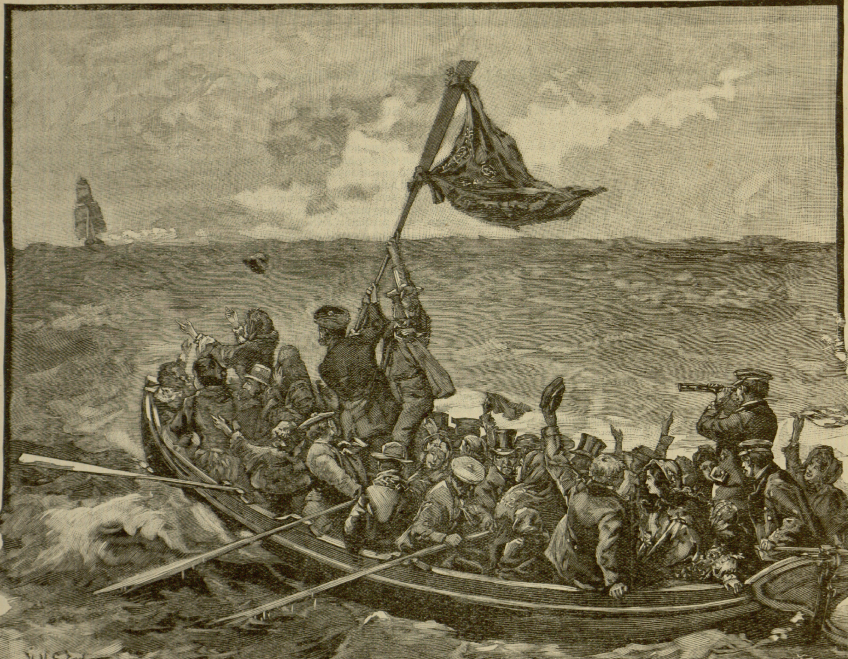
# GERTRUDE HADDON.*

## "ONLY A GIRL'S HEART."--Third Series.

### BY MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.



A WOMAN'S RED SHAWL WAS FASTENED TO AN OAR, WHICH WAS TAKEN BY TWO MEN, WHO HELD IT HIGH.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ICE SHIP.

"WE are lost!" yelled one frantic voice.

"The ship has struck an iceberg and stove in her portquarter!" cried another.

"She is filling fast. She will go to the bottom in five minutes!" roared a chorus.

All this passed within hearing of our panic-stricken little heroine, who sat up in her berth listening and aghast.

Then all individual voices were drowned in a wild confusion of noises, of people rushing about the decks calling, shrieking, groaning, exclaiming, for a great number of passengers had been rudely roused by being thrown from their berths by the violence of the shock when the ship struck, and had rushed out in the extremity of terror to discover the cause of the concussion. Deception was impossible, even if it had been expedient.

The ship was totally wrecked on an island of ice, and every hope of saving her or of keeping her desperate condition concealed from the knowledge of the alarmed passengers was utterly out of the question.

The captain and the officers of the steamer had a double duty to do—to calm the excitement of the terrified crowd and to provide the means of escape from death by drowning.

Soon the tumult somewhat subsided, and above the lowered hum of voices arose the stentorian tones of Captain Knight issuing his commands to his officers and crew in a calm, prompt and perfectly self-possessed manner, and in orderly sequence.

Some men were sent to cover the hole through which the sea was coming in, with sail-cloth, to lessen, if it could not stop, the rapid flow of the water.

Other men were ordered to throw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. Others were sent to the pumps to pump the water from the hold.

And a picked party under the first mate was charged with the duty of getting out the life-boats.

There are supreme crises in life which arouse in some souls all the sublime faith and self-sacrificing heroism of which our human nature is capable, thus rendering them victorious over all suffering, despair and even death.

Such was the effect of this sudden disaster on our Gertrude.

Rallying from the first shock, awed and calmed by the immediate presence of death, she arose and put on her clothes to go on deck.

Her soul was elevated and inspired with thoughts of life, not of death—of meeting, not of parting.

"In another hour," she murmurs to herself—"in another hour I may be born into the purer, freer life. In another hour I may be beside my dear husband—beside him sooner than I hoped to be; nearer to him than I ever was before; nearer to him than I ever could be in this state of existence. And then I need never leave him more, but I may stay with him, an invisible guard to banish all evil, to bring all good."

She opened the door of her stateroom, passed through the deserted cabin and up the companion-ladder to look out.

The weather was intensely, bitterly cold from the surrounding and overhanging ice, but the snow-storm had quite subsided and the sky was clear and the sea calm and the eastern horizon, both sky and sea, flushed with the near rising of the sun.

Nothing in appearance seemed to indicate the least danger.

The ship was fast on an island of ice indeed, but she stood as still as a house on land; her deck, though covered deeply with snow, was as level as a drawing-room floor.

The sea lapped quietly around her stern, while above her bows towered a precipice of ice many hundred feet higher than her mainmast head, and projecting far forward, a broad, overhanging shelf of ice, capped with snow and fringed with icicles many feet in depth.

The ship herself seemed a vessel of ice laden with snow, for not only was her deck deep in snow and glazed with ice, but every mast and timber was sheathed in ice and every cross-beam capped with snow.

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The sun now suddenly sparkling up above the eastern horizon transformed this scene into one of inconceivable beauty, splendor and sublimity. His beams, darting across the sea, touched the ship and the overhanging precipice of ice, lighting them up with prismatic radiance as of millions of rainbows around a ship and island of blazing diamonds set in a sea of opals, under a sky of sapphire, in the glory of the morning, yet lightly vailed by a fine, silvery mist that softened the splendor. Never came the Angel of Death in such magnificent and beautiful array.

Standing at the head of the companion-ladder, Gertrude looked for a moment and then passed on and entered upon the turbulent and frenzied uproar of the thronged and groaning deck, where the multitude of women, girls and children were writhing, weeping and shrieking in all the terror, anguish and despair inspired by their desperate condition, her own the only patient soul and quiet face among them.

Gertrude had scarcely time to take in all the horror of this lower scene, when from the surging crowd shot Sallust Rowley, coming into violent collision with her, and exclaiming:

"Why, Gertrude! I beg your pardon! I was hurrying in search of you. You know what has happened?"

"Yes, I can see what has happened—the ship is wrecked on the ice," she calmly replied.

"And you are not frightened?"

"No."

"Well, you 're a brick! But, as for me, I call it blamed mean of fortune to wreck us twice in one month—first by fire, and then by ice. But come! They are putting the women into the first life-boat. Come!" he exclaimed, seizing her hand, drawing it through his arm, and elbowing and pushing his way through the struggling crowd.

"Are there life-boats enough to save all?" inquired Gertrude, compassionately.

"No, not to save a tenth part of them," answered Sallust.

"Oh, then, can nothing be done for all these people here?" she pleaded, looking on the terrified crowd with the deepest pity.

"Everything possible is being done for them. Every able-bodied man—captain, officers, crew and passengers—are hard at work for their deliverance. Don't hold back, Gertrude. Push! Push as well as I do, or we shall never get through this crowd in time."

"Oh, what are the men doing to save all these?" she persisted.

"Well, some are covering the hole with a succession of sail-cloths, to keep out as much water as possible; others are throwing the cargo overboard, to lighten her; others, again, are bailing her out with buckets; others hard at work at the pumps; all with the purpose of keeping her from sinking until they have time to launch the life-boats and construct a raft Some of the officers and men are now engaged getting out the life-boats. But push, Gertrude. Push as well as I, or we will never get through this press in time to secure the boat," urged Sallust, as he dragged his half-reluctant companion through the crowd to the starboard main-port.

But at that moment a prolonged huzza went up from the sailors in that quarter.

"Oh, what is that for?" eagerly inquired Gertrude, pleased to hear one sound of joy in such a scene of woe.

"That 's for the first boat that is safely lowered and launched and gone. There! I knew we 'd be too late for the first. And now we 'll have to wait for the second boat, and every one lessens our chance of deliverance; for if the steerage passengers should go wild and mutiny, they will seize the life-boats—blast 'em!"

"Oh, Sallust! Sallust! In a scene like this! Hush! Hush! Do not judge them prematurely. Love of life is so natural! They have the same right as others to try to save themselves and their wives and children," said Gertrude, compassionately.

"Yes, but they can't save themselves in that way. Where there is mutiny and violence instead of discipline and order, they are sure to overcrowd and swamp the boats and drown themselves, which would serve them right, and not be of the least consequence, if they had not deprived us of the means of safety."

"Oh, Sallust, do not let us think so much of ourselves when there are so many others to think of!" said Gertrude, earnestly.

"There! They have got the second boat ready now. Come; we must catch her!" exclaimed Mr. Rowley, pulling his companion through the crowd, which was now somewhat thinned, to the larboard main port, where the second boat hung suspended over the side of the ship, above a roseate sea as smooth as a mirror, so that any one could perceive that there was not the slightest difficulty or danger in lowering it to the surface of the water, whatever fate or fortune should afterward attend it.

The boat was manned by the second mate with six sailors, and already well filled with women, children and some few men, but room was made for Gertrude, who was handed into a seat in the stern, and even for Sallust, when it was known that he was her only companion and escort on the voyage.

"Oh, where is Mr. Lackland, Sallust?" anxiously inquired Gertrude, as the young man took his place near her.

"He went off in the first boat. I saw him enter it, to help to work it, bless you! He is a skillful marine officer, among his other accomplishments," answered Sallust.

"I am very glad that he is provided for. But, oh, I hope, I pray that the ship may float until they can make a raft and get everybody off her!" said Gertrude, earnestly clasping her hands.

At that moment the boat was lowered and launched, and as it put off from the side of the wreck a hearty cheer arose from the men left on deck.

"Ah! Brave souls!" thought Gertrude to herself. "Brave souls! It is too sad to hear them cheer us—cheer us, when we are leaving them on the wreck, perhaps to perish!"

And she bowed her head and covered her face with her hands, for she could not look upon those men who stood upon the deck, waving their hats and hands to the retreating boat.

The weather was, as I said before, intensely cold. The passengers had wrapped themselves in their heaviest winter garments, yet they crouched and shuddered in the biting air. They were beginning to get very hungry.

"If one could only have got a cup of tea or a mouthful of breakfast before leaving the wreck," complained one unreasonable woman.

"I wouldn't have minded about the breakfast, if I could only have got a cup of tea," added another.

"There is a cask of fresh water and a bottle of spirits and some bread and canned beef on board," said one of the sailors.

"Where are you going to take us, Mr. Raymond?" inquired Sallust Rowley, of the officer commanding the life-boat.

"We shall steer for the coast of Newfoundland, which is about two hundred miles distant, but we shall probably fall in with some ship and be picked up long before reaching land," answered the mate.

Gertrude heard all this conversation while her head was still bowed on her knees and her face covered with her hands.

She now raised her head and looked around her.

The life-boat No. 2, with her forty passengers, was making good way over the smooth water, but the ship of ice on the island of ice was still in sight astern of them—beautiful and splendid in its sea of opal, still arched with rainbows and vailed with mists as it flashed and sparkled in the morning sun.

Boat No. 1 was far ahead of them, and almost out of sight.

"The first boat is running away from us. I think it would be so much better for the boats to keep together," said one of the women.

"Better for us, maybe, but not for her. She is much the best boat, with the best chance of reaching land in safety, if she should not be picked up. Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and she obeys that law by running away from us!" answered one of the men at the oars.

"Hallo! What 's that?" exclaimed Sallust Rowley, as another cheer, softened by distance, reached their ears.

"It is from the wreck, they have launched the third boat!" answered another passenger, who had raised a small spy-glass to his eye.

Gertrude shuddered with sympathy. She felt it to be too heart-rending to hear the poor men left, perhaps, to perish on the wreck, generously cheering on those who were leaving her, and seeking safety in the life-boats.

No. 2 sped on over the smooth sea.

"If the weather should continue like this for a few days longer, we shall have nothing to fear; we have only to protect ourselves against the cold as well as we can until we reach land, or get picked up," said Sallust Rowley, cheerfully.

Just then another hurrah sounded faintly from the direction of the ship.

"Hurrah! They have launched No. 4! There, that is the last life-boat, and now they have nothing to do but to build their raft!" exclaimed the man with the spy-glass.

Gertrude bowed her head and covered her face again, and prayed for the brave men left behind, that they might have time to build their raft before the sinking of the ship.

They had now run a long way from the wreck, which could be seen by the naked eye only as a cluster of ice, sparkling in the rays of the sun, on the extreme edge of the horizon. The last two boats, like black specks on the expanse of water, at some distance from each other, could be descried advancing toward them.

“Will they overtake us, do you think?” inquired one of the passengers of the officer in command.

“Yes and outstrip us; for they are faster boats than this.”

“Is not this a good boat, then?”

“A very good and reliable boat, but slow,” said Mr. Raymond.

This prediction was verified within the next hour. Boats Nos. 3 and 4 overtook them, cheered, and passed them, and in another hour were completely out of sight.

Life-boat No. 2 was alone on the sea.

The first distribution of rations now took place, and a biscuit, a morsel of beef and a small can of water was served out to each hungry individual.

At noon Mr. Raymond made a reckoning, and declared that they were within two hundred miles of the Island Cove, on the coast of Newfoundland.

At night there was a second distribution of rations, in the same proportion as at the first, and of the same materials, with the addition of a little spirits, added to the water, in the mistaken notion that it would help to keep out the cold of the coming night, to be spent in the open boat at sea.

A brilliant starlight night followed. The air, thought bitterly cold, was very calm, and the sea was very quiet. The boat, steered N. N. W., glided smoothly over the waters.

"If this weather should last, mates, we are sure to reach land all right, even if we are not picked up by some vessel sailing over this course," said one of the men at the oars.

"If we can live through these freezing nights! But I am sure my feet, in the bottom of this boat, are like rocks now! They will be hard frozen by morning," moaned a very old lady, who was seated opposite Gertrude.

"Lift them up and put them in my lap. I will wrap them in my cloak and warm them," said the latter.

"They would give you your death of cold. You might as well take two bricks of ice in your lap," said the old lady. But, nevertheless, she accepted her young neighbor's offer, and let her, with her warm vitality, restore the torpid feet to life.

There were several young children in the boat, who had really seemed to enjoy the trip rather than otherwise. They were the most warmly clothed and the best protected against the extreme cold, and soon after it had grown dark they had fallen asleep with their heads upon their mothers' knees, well covered from night sea-air by their mothers' warm shawls or cloaks.

But no one except the children slept that night.

The position was too strange, too suggestive of danger, even if not too dangerous, to permit them to sleep on this first night in the open boat at sea.

At midnight the sailors were relieved at the oars, several passengers taking their places, while Sallust Rowley volunteered to "spell" Mr. Raymond at the tiller. But even these fatigued men did not yield to sleep.

The night seemed very long, but with the exception of the intense cold it was not so bad. The starlit sky was clear and brilliant, the sea calm and smooth, and the boat glided swiftly over its surface.

In truth, never had a life-boat a more prosperous voyage. Her passengers were saved from all the horrors that usually attend such a situation. They were neither tossed with tempests nor drenched with rain, nor famished with hunger nor parched with thirst.

One old sailor said of that voyage on the life-boat "that there must have been an angel unbeknown in that boat to bring them a blessing."

On the second morning a light breeze sprang up from the northwest. The sun rose clear on a gently rippling sea and displayed to the anxious voyagers—oh, sight of joy !—a large ship, tacking and bearing down upon them from the northeast.

Their souls were thrilled with rapture and gratitude. Expressions of fervent delight and thanksgiving burst from them; and then a unanimous huzza arose from all the men.

But it was necessary to attract the attention of the ship, in case she had not already made them out.

A woman's red shawl was borrowed and fastened to the end of an oar, which was then taken by two men who stood up and held it high above their heads, as the ship bore down upon them, until at length a salvo-shot from the stranger told them that they were observed. Then the men lowered their improvised signal of distress, and, nerved by the certainty of safety, took to the oars and rowed toward the ship.

"I wonder what she is?" said two or three women in a breath.

"Don't know," answered several of the men.

"I wonder where she is going?" said the women.

"Can't tell," said the men.

"Oh, I do hope we shall be comfortable when we get on board of her. Do you think we shall, sir?" inquired the old lady of Mr. Rowley.

"Haven't an idea, ma'am. We shall

see when we get there," answered Sallust.

"Let us thank Heaven for this speedy deliverance," said Gertrude in a low voice.

"Yes, dear; and as for me, I thank you, too, that my poor old feet are not frozen so hard as to require amputation—a trial to the nerves that I am sure I could not stand at my time of life. But I am only afraid that you will suffer for your kindness and get inflammation of the lungs with having had such dabs of ice against your bosom," replied the old lady, as she drew her feet from Gertrude's lap and began to rub them.

"Gertrude, dear cousin, how are you getting on anyway?" inquired Sallust, looking over his shoulder.

"Very well indeed, thanks! And you?" she asked.

"Oh, capitally! And we shall get on board that ship in good time for breakfast. Think of a cup of good hot coffee after such a day and night as we have passed!" he exclaimed.

"Sallust, we have had a blessed day and

night, and we have every reason to be deeply grateful! We have not suffered at all. We have been cold in the open boat, but not enough to hurt us; and, oh, what a quick deliverance!"

"Just cold and hungry and tired enough to give us a keen sense of enjoyment in a warm cabin, a good breakfast-table and comfortable berths," said Sallust, smiling on her.

## CHAPTER IV.

### "GOD BLESS CAPTAIN WAILES AND THE 'BECKY.'"

The boat was now rapidly approaching the ship, which was lying to, waiting for her.

"What is she?" inquired Sallust Rowley of the world at large.

"Don't know, but she carries the stars and stripes," answered the man with the telescope, as he politely passed his instrument to the questioner, that the latter might look for himself.

"An American ship!" said a chorus of voices.

"A merchantman," added Sallust Rowley, squinting through the spy-glass.

"If she happens to be homeward bound, we shall not be so badly off, after all," observed one of the passengers.

Gertrude fervently hoped that she might be homeward bound, but said nothing.

They drew nearer and nearer the ship. They could plainly see the men standing on her deck.

In five minutes more they were almost under her bows.

The oarsmen pulled alongside the starboard gangway, where they secured the boat, while the chilled and stiffened women were helped to climb on deck.

This, always an awkward process, was made doubly difficult by the condition of the party, whose limbs were benumbed with cold and cramped by long sitting in one constrained position.

The captain, who, with several of his officers and men, stood on deck to receive the women as they were handed up one by one, welcomed them all heartily, condoled with them on their late heavy calamity, but congratulated them on their lucky escape, and cordially offered them the use of his after-cabin, with every aid and service in his power to bestow.

Gertrude, in behalf of herself and her companions, thanked the kindly sailor and accepted all his offers.

The captain then sent for the stewardess, a fat, good-natured-looking mulatto of about fifty, who came forward to take the women below and provide for their comfort.

She took them down to the cabin, which was comfortably warmed by a large iron stove, around which all the women immediately gathered to warm their chilled and benumbed limbs.

"It is a mercy that your clothes are all dry, ladies," said the stewardess, as she stirred the fire. "You couldn't have been exposed to that snowstorm day before yesterday. How long might you have been out in the open boat?"

"Just twenty-four hours, I think. We left the wreck about this hour yesterday morning," answered Gertrude, for the party.

"Dear me! And how did it all happen,

honey?"

"Our ship, the *Zanzibar*, from Southampton to New York, struck an iceberg."

"Lor' bless us! So many ships be wrecked that way! I 'most swear, every time I get to port, that I never will trust myself on shipboard again. But I have been so long with Captain Wailes and the *Becky* that I do suppose I shall end my days here."

"'Captain Wailes and the *Becky?*'" echoed Gertrude, anxious to know all about the destination of the ship with which her fortunes were linked for the present.

"Yes, honey—Captain Wailes and the *Becky*. The *Becky*, of Baltimore, though him and me and the two mates and the cook and a good part of the crew be from the neighborhood of Charlotte Hall, St. Mary's County, Maryland. And most of us have sailed along of Captain Wailes for twenty year or more. Me and my husband—he 's the ship's cook—have sailed with him for twenty-two years. Just you think, honey, of sailing in the same ship with the same mates and pretty much the same crew for so many years! Don't you think it just miraculous?"

"I know very little about sea-life; but in land-life I know it is common to live in the same house, with the same family and the same servants, for many years at a time," said Gertrude.

"Lor' bless you, honey, it is very different with a ship that changes its crew with every voyage. But the *Becky* is a notable exception to all rules. First place, it is perfectly wonderful any ship should 'a' kept afloat so many years without an accident, and that the ship's company should 'a' kept together all this time is more so; and altogether it is just miraculous."

"How do you account for it?" inquired Gertrude.

"Why, honey, it is just because we all love Captain Wailes so well we won't leave him. Why, there is the first mate, Mr. Burroughs, and the second mate, Mr. Estep—they have both been offered the command of merchant-ships time and again—there was temptation!—and they refused—they refused them! There was fye-dility! Why, child, what do you think the officers and crew of the *Becky* did once?"

"What did they do?"

"It was about two years ago last winter, and the *Becky* was at Canton. And when Christmas came around, I 'm blessed if them fellows didn't combine to present Captain Wailes with the completest and beautifulest set of chiny you ever beheld! There was a full breakfast-set, dinner-set, tea-set, and toilet-set, too, if you will believe me! There were three hundred and thirty-three pieces in all! And every single cup and saucer, dish and plate and bowl and basin, had burned into it, in red letters: '*God bless Captain Wailes and the Becky.*' What do you think of that now?" triumphantly inquired the stewardess.

"They must have loved and honored their captain very much," said Gertrude, smiling.

"Three hundred and thirty-three blessings, burnt in red letters on the finest chiny!" added the stewardess, exultingly.

Then, seeing that the women around the fire were growing restless, she said:

"And now, ladies, if you would like to go to your staterooms, to take a good wash-off, I 'll wait on you."

The women all arose to follow her.

The cabin was a very comfortable one, though quite plainly fitted up.

It was provided with twelve staterooms, six being on each side. Each stateroom was furnished with two berths, a wash-stand and a chair. There were eleven ladies and nine children to be accommodated.

When these were all quartered in their places, the good-natured stewardess said to Gertrude:

"Now, my dear, *you* are to have a stateroom to yourself, as you seem to be the only lady as hasn't got some un hanging on to her."

"But if any of the other ladies are crowded, I can easily take some one in with me," answered Gertrude.

"They ain't crowded, honey, besides which, none of 'em wants their party to be separated; no, not after sich an adventer as they had yesterday on the ice. You must tell me all about it, honey, soon as we get settled," said the woman.

"I will, with great pleasure, for, oh, how thankful I am that we fell in with your ship!" replied Gertrude, as she entered the stateroom pointed out to her by the stewardess, and closed the door.

The first thing Gertrude did in the solitude of her own room was to kneel beside her berth and return thanks to Heaven for their great deliverance.

Then she arose to undress and take a good wash.

She felt perfectly contented with her situation. She heard the good stewardess say that the *Becky* was from Baltimore. She knew that when the life-boat fell in with the ship, the latter was first seen off to the northeast, and was steering in a southwesterly direction, the direction she would have taken to Baltimore, and she judged that the *Becky* was homeward-bound, and she rejoiced in the thought that her meeting with her husband could not long be delayed.

How bitterly the poor child was mistaken remains to be seen.

While the women of the party were made comfortable by the stewardess, the men received the ministrations of the captain and his mates.

By the time the women had refreshed themselves with a partial bath and hairdressing and returned to the cabin, a man put his head in at the top of the companion-stairs and notified them that breakfast was ready in the main cabin.

The weary women, longing for their comforting cups of tea or coffee, moved as promptly as their still stiffened limbs would let them and went up.

At the head of the companion-ladder they were met by the captain of the ship and some of the men of their own party.

"Give me your hand, my dear, to steady you," said the captain, speaking to Gertrude as if she were the child he supposed her to be.

"I thank you, sir," she replied as she accepted his offered aid.

"Now tell me your name, my dear, that I may know what to call you," he said as he drew her hand within his arm and with a fatherly tenderness supported her steps along the rolling deck to the after cabin.

"My name is Mrs. Gerald Fitzgerald."

The captain stopped and looked at her in amazement for a moment, and then said with comic gravity:

"Now let me introduce myself: My name is George Wailes, master of the *Becky;* and we are both at your service."

"Thanks! Yes, I know. '*God bless Captain Wailes and the Becky!*'" said the little lady, her brown eyes twinkling.

The good captain burst into so loud a laugh that he attracted the attention of all his companions, who look around to see what was the matter.

"*That* was some of Kitty Barber, my worthy stewardess's, gossip," said the captain, as he led his young companion into the main cabin and placed her in her seat.

The captain took the head of the table and the first mate the foot. On each side sat the men and women rescued from the life-boat, and also about half a dozen other men. There seemed to be no women except those of our party.

"Yes," said the captain, in answer to some observation made on this subject, "we used to have a great many passengers, both ladies and gentlemen, until the steamships broke up our trade in that line. Now we only have a few merchants or missionaries, and never any ladies, except by such a chance as this."

The breakfast, of fragrant Mocha coffee, black and green tea, delicate rolls, richly-flavored ham, broiled chickens and Dundee marmalade, was altogether delicious, and was greatly enjoyed by the hungry refugees from the life-boat.

"How soon do you expect to get into port, Captain Wailes?" inquired Gertrude, in the first pause of the feeding. "Do you think you will be in within ten days?"

"'Within ten days!' Why, my dear madam, where do you think we are bound?" exclaimed the captain in surprise.

"Homeward! To Baltimore, of course," answered Gertrude, uneasily.

"We are bound to San Francisco by way of Cape Horn."

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 34.]